

Hebrews 12.18-29

Jesus is Forever Better!

Book of Hebrews taken us GRAND TOUR of Old Covenant Scripture

Heroes of Faith – Exploits of Men and Women struggled to Follow God

Gates of Garden of Eden – Ark of Noah - Courts of Melchizedek –

Tents of Abraham – Wilderness wanderings of Israelites led by Moses

End ch 12 Pastor/Guide Most Important Location for Jewish Believer

Most SIGNIFICANT Meeting with God in all of Hebrew History

Moses & Aaron to Pharaoh, “Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, ‘Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness.’ Exodus 5.1

END Theological Exhortation of Concerned Pastor / Ch 13 Impt. Applic

Here Takes Beloved Readers to Highest, Holiest, Point of Hebrew History

Finish SERMON at APEX of Jewish Hope & Tradition > Mt. SINAI

Like Every STOP in Tour in Hebrews > Concludes: “Jesus is Better”

### 1. Trembling on Sinai

Been Teaching how OT Saints relied on 'Invisible' Promises of God

Moves to FAMOUS Time when God seemed 'Visible' and Tangible.

v. 18 For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest

GOD told Moses to WARN the Million-plus Israelites crossed Red Sea

Don't go NEAR Mt. Sinai > Don't even TOUCH Edges of Mountains

You, KIDS, ANIMALS > Stay CLEAR of this HOLY Ground

Mt. was Blazing FIRE > Not Safely Contained in Fireplace

Menacing, Dangerous, Destructive, Deadly FIRE

DARKNESS > Gloom and Tempest > Shadow of DEATH

v. 19 the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them.

People worried they'd DIE > Told Moses to Speak to GOD himself

Irony > They could SEE God on SINAI > was Even FURTHER Away!

Without Acceptable Sacrifice for Sin > No Way of Drawing Near

v. 20 For they could not endure the order that was given, "If even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned."

SIGHTS & SOUNDS Scarry!! - AWESOME EVIDENCES OF GOD

TRUMPET Blast and VOICE of God like THUNDER

Description of Every Element to Arouse FEAR, DANGER, WARNING

Like the FLAMING Cherubim that PROTECTED Garden of EDEN

Message is SAME > Guilty Sinners cannot Go Near a HOLY God

v. 21 so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, "I tremble with fear."

Quote from Later in Exodus > After Israelites made Golden Calf

GOD warns NEW BORN Nation // Parents warn CHILDREN

He is MAKER, PROVIDER, SAVIOR, JUDGE

TERRIFYING for God's Friend MOSES / MEEKEST Man on Earth

We OFTEN Think > Things were BETTER in the GOOD Old Days!

Readers understanding CLOUDED by NOSTALGIA

Get DOSE of Historical REALITY > those Days were TERRIFYING!

And you WANT to GO BACK to THAT!!

## 2. Triumph in Zion

YOU Hebrew Christians in CHURCH have ALSO come to Mountain

But NOT THAT Mountain – Not Sinai but Zion – Not Moses but Jesus

From Cries of FEAR to Songs of JOY > from GLOOM to GLORY

v. 22 But you have come to Mount Zion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem...

Zion is God's ACROPOLIS – Mountain City - Seat of His THRONE

11.10 “the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God”

Temple of Jerusalem sat atop Mount Zion > place God dwelt among Jews

Synonyms > Writer refers to same thing in different ways.

"Mount Zion", "the city of the living God", "heavenly Jerusalem"

OT Heroes of FAITH LOOKED to God's CITY as Forever HOME

they are seeking a homeland...they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city. Hebrews 11.14-16

Sinai was WARNING – Zion is WELCOME

Sinai was GUILT – Zion is GRACE

Then the writer describes the ZION'S CITIZENS...

v. 22 innumerable angels in festal gathering,

ANGELS are Mighty Warriors of God > Often Agents of JUDGMENT

Usually 1<sup>st</sup> words are 'FEAR NOT' because to See them Evokes Fear

But these Angels have Party Hats On! FESTAL Array / Joyful Celebration

Jesus: “I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents.” Luke 15.10

v. 23 and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven

FIRSTBORN > Character & Composition of Church

1<sup>st</sup> Born Double Portion Inheritance

Every Citizen so Favored > Entire City of BLESSED Heirs of God

Firstborn Sons REDEEMED by the Blood of the LAMB > Exodus

Dodged a BULLET > Angel of DEATH PASSED OVER their Homes

Saving BLOOD of Jesus spoke LIFE > LAMB of God for Sins of World

“to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God”  
John 1.12

v. 23 and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect,

Picture of Church MILITANT & TRIUMPHANT > Earth and Heaven

Firstborn in X Now Judged RIGHTEOUS and Made PERFECT

Throne of Judgment has NOW become a Throne of GRACE

Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Hebrews 4.16

v. 24 and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant

Moses was MEDIATOR climbed up Mt. Sinai w Fear & Trembling

Jesus MEDIATOR of New Covenant removes Fear, Guilt, Shame

Purpose of EXODUS Deliverance was to Worship and Serve GOD

Now in Jesus meet God of Heaven > He is Emmanuel – God with US

Redemption leads to Relationship / Freed from Egypt to Serve God

Zion better than Sinai – Law is Satisfied by the Gospel – Jesus better than Moses

v. 24 the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel

BOTH Abel & Jesus KILLED by BROTHERS > Cain/Abel, We/Jesus

BLOOD of Abel cries for JUSTICE > Blood of JESUS Satisfies Justice

Abel's Blood sent Cain Out of Eden > Jesus Blood secures City of God

Abel's Blood cries GUILTY! Jesus Blood conveys GRACE!

### 3. Tested by Shaking

v. 25 “See to it that you do not refuse”...

STRANGE have WARNING AFTER such Strong, Secure PROMISES?

5<sup>th</sup> & FINAL Exhortation in Hebrews against FALLING AWAY from X

“SEE TO IT” – Favorite Expression of WATCHFULNESS, Warning

See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. Hebrews 3.12 NIV

NO Middle Ground – WORD of GOD is RECEIVED or REJECTED

Citizen of God's Unshakeable Kingdom / Perish with Lost Universe

Some END Reading at v. 24 > Saved, Secure, Serve Myself, Sleep IN!

Put Bumper Sticker on Car "Christians are Not Perfect, Just Forgiven"

BE Worst Driver on ROAD > Since I am going to Heaven, Live like Hell!

Jesus much NICER than Moses > Follow Him / Not Laws and Judgment

God has Not Changed > Still HOLY God that appeared at Mt Sinai

God at Mt Sinai in 'God of OT' SAME GOD in the New Testament

God of Mercy and Grace is God of Fire > Immutable / Unchanging

Might Think writer will say: "So you needn't fear him anymore."

But actually says: "So NOW you have even more reason to fear him."

v. 25, 26 For if they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven. At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens."

Key Difference is Motivation behind this Fearful Obedience

Not Worry IF we CAN Approach God > Worship because we Have

Why was ISRAEL at Foot of SINAI? Been SAVED thru RED SEA

Why tell KID Brush Teeth? Breath Fogging Windows? YOU'RE My Kid!

RELATIONSHIP carries RESPONSIBILITIES

God coming w/ Greater Power than Sinai

v. 27 This phrase, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of things that are shaken—that is, things that have been made—in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain.

> Quotes Prophet HAGGAI

Everything Belongs to God / All Will be Shaken / He gets Eternal Glory

Contrary to Message of World > Perhaps Message we TEACH Our Kids

Open Savings Account / Good JOB / Marry UP / Buy PROPERTY

GREAT Advice > May be Hearing – Spiritual Matters LESS important

What will UNI do for Faith? MOVE / JOB what kind of Churches there?

Situation of Hebrews > Writer EXHORTING Stick with JESUS

Some gone to PRISON / Lost HOUSES & Properties / Some KILLED

Hey, we can FIND Another Church / SAFER Religion / Keep PEACE??

Ask READERS Letter: LIVE Longer? Roman Empire or Xtian Church?

STUPID Question, OBVIOUS Answer

ROME will Last Forever > Pomp, Pageantry, Eternal GLORY!

Eternal City OVERRUN by Barbarians / Statues CRASHED to Ground

Quote from WORLD-ENDING Prophecy of HAGGAI

Not just ONE-OFF Comment in Strange Book in OT many Never Read

TRUTH Taught thru ALL of Bible

Prophet ISAIAH All flesh is grass, and all its beauty is like the flower of the field...surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.  
Isaiah 40.6-8

Apostle JOHN "the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever"  
1 John 2.17

Apostle PETER "the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar"  
2 Peter 3.10

Apostle PAUL "For the present form of this world is passing away" 1 Corinthians 7.31

Lord JESUS "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away." Matt 24.35

One of TRAGEDIES in Turkey/Syria is Corruption / Cheap Materials

NEW High-Rise Apartments FLATTENED like layered Pancakes

Not PREPARED for Strong SHAKING > BUCKLED into Dust, Rubble

Following Jesus requires STRONG Faith > Life has many Shake Ups!

BUILD on ROCK with Good Materials > Faith, Hope, Love FOREVER

But we PRAY "your KINGDOM Come" > Even to EARTH

Bible PROMISES > RULE of God Forever GROWING > FILL Earth

Deeper into OUR Lives – All the SAINTS – All of SOCIETY

KNOW that One Day > Every Knee Bow / Tongue Confess / Jesus, Lord

// Readers of Hebrews > We Face Choices > What is MORE Important?

Earthly Treasure? / Promotion at Work? / Romance? / Friendship?

All have a PLACE in Life > All will BE SHAKEN > Only Jesus Stands

Everything will FALL > Except GOD and His KINGDOM

How do you RESPOND to UNALTERABLE FACT God's Kingdom?

vs. 28, 29 Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire.

Grateful – Acceptable Worship – Reverence and Awe

Not SMALL Thing > MIGHTY – Nothing MORE Important

GOD is Consuming Fire – God of Wrath – JEALOUS, Only GOD

C.S. Lewis “Chronicles of Narnia” *Silver Chair*

ASLAN Giant, Majestic LION depicts the LORD

Adventurous, Heroine, girl named JILL > Comes to Stream of WATER

Been LOST in Forest / DYING of THIRST / Sees LION by Stream

TERRIFIED / STOPS / Lion invites ‘If Thirsty, Come and Drink!’

Dying of Thirst / LISTENING to Gurgle of Stream / Steps FORWARD

‘Will you PROMISE Not to do anything to me if I do COME?’

LION calmly Replies “I make NO PROMISE”

JILL comes Closer / Great Thirst / asks “Do you EAT girls?”

“I have swallowed up girls and boys, women and men, kings and emperors, cities and realms”

Jill “I Dare Not Come to Drink / Aslan “Then you will Die of Thirst”

Jill “Oh, dear, I better find another stream” / A: “There is NO OTHER!”

NO other Zion – No other Salvation – No other Jesus – No other Stream

BLOOD speaks word of GRACE > Better Savior than you are a SINNER

RESTS Enthroned in His City > We can REST Our HEARTS in Him

Hebrews 12<sup>18</sup>For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest <sup>19</sup>and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them. <sup>20</sup>For they could not endure the order that was given, “If even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned.” <sup>21</sup>Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, “I tremble with fear.” <sup>22</sup>But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, <sup>23</sup>and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, <sup>24</sup>and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel. <sup>25</sup>See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven. <sup>26</sup>At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, “Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.” <sup>27</sup>This phrase, “Yet once more,” indicates the removal of things that are shaken—that is, things that have been made—in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain. <sup>28</sup>Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, <sup>29</sup>for our God is a consuming fire.